UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/SR.204
1 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 204th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 27 January 1994, at 10.30 a.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI (Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

CONTENTS

Adoption of the agenda

Election of officers

Organization of work

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/AC.183/1994/L.1)

1. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia), supported by Mr. SAMASSEKOU (Mali), nominated Mr. Cissé (Senegal) for re-election to the office of Chairman, Mr. Remírez de Estenoz Barciela (Cuba) and Mr. Farhadi (Afghanistan) for re-election to the two offices of Vice-Chairman and Mr. Cassar (Malta) for re-election to the office of Rapporteur.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to elect the candidates as officers of the Committee nominated by the representative of Tunisia.

4. It was so decided.

5. Mr. Cissé (Senegal) took the Chair.

6. The SECRETARY-GENERAL said that the Committee was resuming its work on the basis of a General Assembly mandate that had been renewed with the approval of the great majority of Member States. In the relevant resolution adopted at the forty-eighth session, the General Assembly had welcomed the signing, on 13 September 1993, of the Declarations of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, had reaffirmed its permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine and had emphasized the valuable and positive contribution which the Committee could make in promoting the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The important role played by the Committee in mobilizing international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people was also highlighted in the report of the seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people which had been held in April 1993 at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

7. The General Assembly had also requested the Committee to continue its efforts to reach out to non-governmental organizations. The role of such organizations, because of their presence in the field, was crucial in promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. Having a wide variety of interests and backgrounds, non-governmental organizations had been and continued to be strong defenders of the rights of the Palestinians. Their contribution to development, education and health had been invaluable.

8. As negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) progressed, the support of the international community would become more important than ever. It was that support, in the form of multilateral and bilateral assistance, which would help in the difficult days of transition. The United Nations was present in the field through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

(The Secretary-General)

Other agencies of the United Nations system had dispatched missions and were actively exploring avenues for cooperation in that process.

9. The General Assembly had stressed the great importance of coordinating such assistance. In that connection, he (the Secretary-General) had decided to appoint a senior United Nations official resident in the area of the Middle East to oversee coordination arrangements for the interim period.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that at a time when the Middle East region was passing through a complex period of transition, the Committee must act even more decisively and play a greater role in the current peace process so that it would lead to the enjoyment of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement in the region that was comprehensive, just and lasting.

11. The statement made by the Secretary-General showed the particular importance which the latter attached to the settlement of the Palestinian question. The members of the Committee had noted with satisfaction the statement which the Secretary-General had made on 1 September 1993 on the occasion of the signing of the Washington Agreement and his important initiative calling for cooperation to promote the economic and social development of the Palestinian territories.

12. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that, at its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly had once again expressed its support for the Palestinian cause. The United Nations continued to support the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and would not relax its efforts to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. The United Nations would bear continuing responsibility for the Palestinian question until it was settled in all its aspects. In his view the role of the United Nations and the Secretariat in the period ahead would involve three components: support for the Declaration by the United Nations system and increasing the role of the system in the settlement process; providing assistance to the Palestinian people in the transitional period by, for example, assisting in the training of Palestinian policemen; the necessary coordination of activities of the various United Nations bodies under the direct leadership of the Secretary-General.

13. He welcomed the efforts made by the Secretary-General, including the establishment of a high-level working group, the sending of a high-level mission to the occupied territories to meet with Palestinian leaders, and his announcement of the appointment of a personal representative, who would act directly in the region. It was to be hoped that all the organs of the United Nations would effectively and efficiently work for the implementation of those initiatives.

14. The Secretary-General withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

15. Mr. CASSAR (Malta), Rapporteur, said that, at its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly had adopted a number of important resolutions on the question of Palestine which took into account the major developments that had occurred recently. The resolutions also recognized that the Committee had an important role to play in the peace process that was under way. It should be emphasized that the resolutions had once again been adopted by large majorities. That reflected the determination of the international community to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question and served to encourage the Committee to intensify its efforts even further in the coming year.

16. The Committee would need to consider soon what activities it wished to undertake in 1994 in pursuance of its mandate, having regard to the ongoing peace talks and current developments in the region. The Bureau of the Committee had already given some thought to the matter. A programme of work for 1994 would be circulated to the members of the Committee in the near future. In accordance with past practice he proposed the re-establishment of the open-ended working group.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that, as there were no further speakers, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the Rapporteur's proposal to re-establish the open-ended working group, with Mr. Cassar (Malta) serving as Chairman and Mrs. Vasisht (India) as Vice-Chairman.

18. It was so decided.

19. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) thanked the members of the Committee for having elected him as a Vice-Chairman and expressed the hope that the Committee's efforts in 1994 would be crowned with success.

20. Mr. REMIREZ de ESTENOZ BARCIELA (Cuba) expressed his gratitude at having been elected a Vice-Chairman of the Committee and said that he greatly appreciated the confidence that had been reposed in his country. The positive turn of events in the Middle East region gave cause for hope that speedy progress could be made in implementing the mandate of the Committee. The Committee must do everything in its power to promote progress in the talks aimed at securing a definitive and just settlement of the question of Palestine.

The meeting rose at noon.

A/AC.183/SR.205

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/SR.205
18 April 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 205th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 23 March 1994, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSÉ (Senegal)

CONTENTS

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Adoption of the agenda

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

Report by the Chairman on the Preparatory Meeting for the North American NGO Symposium held at New York on 31 January and 1 February 1994 and the Preparatory Meeting for the European NGO Symposium and International NGO Meeting held at Geneva on 21 and 22 February 1994

Draft programme of work for 1994

Other matters

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

1. Mr. GOULDING (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that in reappointing him head of the Department for Political Affairs, the Secretary-General had thereby entrusted him with the responsibility for the work of the Division for Palestinian Rights, which serviced the Committee. Since its inception, the Committee had contributed to the search for a peaceful and just settlement of the Palestine question by promoting a solution based on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. By participating in Security Council and General Assembly debates and organizing seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, and through its programme of studies and publications, the Committee had helped keep that vital question on the international agenda. It had also worked to improve the living conditions of Palestinians and build peace in the occupied territories through its support for the recent agreements and its efforts to mobilize development assistance on the part of the international community. In renewing the Committee's mandate at its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly had expressed the view that the Committee could make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (S/26560) and mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period. Like his predecessors, the Secretary-General had, on many occasions, expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Committee and pledged his support for its work.

2. The Secretary-General was deeply concerned about the act of violence committed by an Israeli settler on 25 February 1994 at the Mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron and the unrest and further casualties that had ensued, as well as the resulting setback for the peace negotiations. He had appealed for calm on the part of all concerned so that the implementation of the Declaration of Principles could proceed without delay and had called upon the Israeli authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that settlers refrained from such criminal acts. In resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, the Security Council had condemned the massacre in Hebron and called upon Israel to take measures with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by settlers and had also called for measures to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians, including a temporary international or foreign presence. The resolution also reaffirmed the Council's support for the peace process currently under way and called for the implementation of the Declaration of Principles without delay. As always, the Secretary-General was ready to provide whatever assistance might be requested by the parties in that endeavour. It was of the highest importance that the peace negotiations should proceed speedily since only a comprehensive settlement would restore a sense of security to the peoples of the region.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM

4. The CHAIRMAN said that the entire international community had expressed outrage at the Hebron massacre. He had immediately addressed a letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (A/48/883-S/1994/220) and had taken part in the Security Council debate on the massacre (see S/PV.3342) that had led to the adoption of resolution 904 (1994).

5. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that the Hebron massacre, the most horrible act that had ever been committed in the contemporary history of the Palestinian people, was directly linked to the colonization ideology of Israel, which must absolutely put an end to the policy of illegal settlement since that was the only way to bring about a just and realistic solution that might prevent a recurrence of such crimes. The massacre underscored how important it was to ensure the protection and safety of the Palestinians in the occupied territory at the current time and during the transitional period.

6. The reactions had been unanimous and unambiguous. Through resolution 904 (1994), the Security Council had strongly condemned the massacre in Hebron, even though it had been necessary to wait four weeks for that. Resolution 904 (1994) provided an appropriate basis for ensuring the resumption and success of the peace process. It also called upon Israel to do everything necessary to prevent further acts of violence by Israeli settlers, inter alia, by confiscating arms, as well as measures to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including the establishment of an international or foreign presence, and requested the co-sponsors of the peace process to undertake the necessary support for the implementation of those measures. He stressed that that international presence must be extended throughout the occupied territory and must come under the responsibility of the United Nations, which represented international legality.

7. His delegation had noted the fact that the Secretary-General had offered his assistance and had, before the adoption of Security Council resolution 904 (1994), submitted to Israel proposals which, although they did not go as far as the resolution, were nevertheless quite specific. He also wished to thank the Chairman for his efforts in that regard.

8. His delegation, however, had been deeply disappointed by the stand taken by the United States of America concerning resolution 904 (1994), particularly with regard to Jerusalem, on which that country's position not only constituted a step back in comparison to what it had been earlier, but more seriously, ran counter to the position adopted to date by the Security Council. It was hoped that the United States would henceforth bring its position into line with that of the Security Council and take a balanced stance in accordance with its role as a co-sponsor of the peace process.

9. Israeli oppression had been intensified and there were fears of a general uprising and an irreversible escalation of violence. The increased oppression was occurring at the same time that an Israeli delegation was holding talks in Tunis and Cairo with Palestinian leaders, which demonstrated blatant contradictions in Israel's policy. Moreover, those talks had not yet yielded any tangible results since Israel had still not put forward any specific proposal which really responded to the requirements of the peace process and

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

international legality, as expressed by the Security Council in resolution 904 (1994). While the Palestinians had a direct interest in the resumption and completion of the peace process, that could not be achieved at the expense of their prior needs, particularly their safety, which must be guaranteed throughout the occupied territory, including Jerusalem.

10. Mr. PASWAN (India) reaffirmed the solidarity of the people and Government of India with the people of Palestine and his Government's principled and continuing support for the inalienable, basic rights of the Palestinian people, with which India had historic ties of friendship and socio-cultural links. The Hebron massacre had struck a blow to the hopes for a just and comprehensive settlement that had been raised by the signing of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993 by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. His Government called upon Israel to take immediate and effective steps to ensure that such a criminal act did not recur, that the guilty parties were brought to trial and that the lives and property of innocent people in the occupied territories were protected. His delegation hoped that everything would be done to reduce tensions. It was of paramount importance that the climate of peace and tranquillity, already so fragile, should not be further eroded at that critical phase in the Middle East peace process.

11. Mr. ABU ODEH (Jordan) hoped that Security Council resolution 904 (1994) would be implemented in all good faith, in other words, that the Palestinian population would be protected against terrorism by the settlers and that first of all the Israeli occupier would take all measures necessary in that regard so that the peace negotiations could make progress.

12. Nevertheless, a political aspect must be given attention: during the adoption of resolution 904 (1994), the United States of America, which was the only country that had not voted on the second and sixth preambular paragraphs and which was one of the two co-sponsors of the peace process, had stated, in justifying its abstention, that the Palestinians and Israelis had agreed in their Declaration of Principles to defer consideration of the question of Jerusalem. Remaining silent on that question undermined the cause of peace. On the one hand, although resolution 904 (1994) referred to Jerusalem, without seeking to resolve the issue, it did so in order to stress that the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of that city must also be protected. Furthermore, it was unacceptable for the Declaration of Principles to serve as a screen for those who would wish to go back on the basic principles set forth in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and other Council resolutions. Furthermore, although the Palestinians had agreed to defer consideration of the question of Jerusalem, that did not mean that the city was no longer an occupied territory; they had done so merely because the matter had been extremely delicate and might have obstructed, from the outset, the peace process. Lastly, there seemed to be an attempt to make the question of Jerusalem, which was an essential element in the Israeli-Arab conflict, a purely Israeli-Palestinian problem, while it concerned all Arabs, as well as Muslims and Christians throughout the world. Taking such a situation lightly would be the surest way to torpedo efforts aimed at establishing the lasting peace which the whole world sought.

13. The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of Jordan that the Committee's position on the question of Jerusalem was unchanging, and that it would adhere

to that position while taking into account the actual situation and the wishes of each of the delegations.

14. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) praised the Chairman's efforts. Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles, some people had felt that the Committee's role and activities were going to decrease as a result of the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). However, the Hebron massacre had demonstrated the need for increased vigilance in the occupied territories, showing that the Committee's role was even more important than before.

15. The reference to Jerusalem in Security Council resolution 904 (1994) reflected the Committee's position. The operative part of that resolution constituted a veritable working programme. However, the resolution failed to address the problem as a whole and did not even touch on the fundamental issue which lay at the root of the massacre, namely the Jewish settlements and the ideology underlying the settlements. The memory of the Hebron massacre would dominate negotiations between the PLO and Israel. The first step should be to disarm settlers living near to areas inhabited by Palestinians and to move them away; eventually, all the settlers should leave the occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem. That definitive evacuation, which would have to be negotiated and had not even been mentioned in Security Council resolution 904 (1994), was the key to the settlement of the Palestinian question and the establishment of genuine peace in the region.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN ON THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN NGO SYMPOSIUM HELD AT NEW YORK ON 31 JANUARY AND 1 FEBRUARY 1994 AND THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM AND INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING HELD AT GENEVA ON 21 AND 22 FEBRUARY 1994

16. The CHAIRMAN, reporting on the consultations that the Bureau of the Committee and the Permanent Observer for Palestine had held on 31 January and 1 February 1994 in New York with the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs, said that those consultations had, among other things, covered the eleventh regional NGO symposium on the Question of Palestine tentatively scheduled to be held in New York from 29 June to 1 July 1994. He briefly described the contents of the provisional agenda for the symposium entitled "Palestine: Towards a just and lasting peace - Focus on mobilizing NGO support for cooperation and development" contained in working paper No. 1. The consultations had also covered future cooperation between NGOs and the Committee, the new database system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and modalities for cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights with regard to that information system, and criteria for accreditation of NGOs with a view to expanding the network of organizations dealing with humanitarian and development issues.

17. On 21 and 22 February 1994, he himself together with the Rapporteur and a counsellor in the Office of the Permanent Observer for Palestine had held consultations at Geneva with the European and international coordinating committees for NGOs. The discussions, which had led to a better understanding of the various positions, had focused on joint action and on the proposal that the eighth European Regional NGO Symposium and the eleventh International NGO

(The Chairman)

Meeting on the Question of Palestine should be combined and that the theme should be: "Building on the Declaration of Principles towards the independent Palestinian State". He briefly outlined the provisional programme of that combined meeting, which was contained in working paper No. 2, adding that the total number of invitees to the two meetings would depend on budgetary provisions as well as the need to save money.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt working papers 1 and 2.

19. It was so decided.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1994 (A/AC.183/1994/CRP.1)

20. Mr. CASSAR (Rapporteur) introduced the Committee's draft programme of work for 1994 (A/AC.183/1994/CRP.1) which the Bureau had drawn up after giving considerable thought to the role to be played by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights at that important moment in the history of Palestine. Section I of the draft programme summarized the mandate given by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session to the Committee. Section II outlined the major objectives for 1994 namely promoting support for the ongoing peace process in order to promote the effective implementation of the agreements reached, promoting intensified assistance to the Palestinian people, encouraging constructive consideration of the major issues to be negotiated with a view to promoting a final settlement based on international legitimacy. Sections III A, B and C dealt in detail with the activities whereby the Committee would implement those broad objectives. The seminar on Palestinian trade and investment needs (para. 16), would be held at UNESCO headquarters from 20 to 23 June 1994. Section III D concerned various publications to be prepared by the Division for Palestinian Rights. Section III E related to the observance in 1994 of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People through a special programme, including an exhibit to be displayed at United Nations Headquarters from 28 November to 5 December 1994.

21. Mr. THANARAJASINGAM (Malaysia) inquired whether in view of the element introduced by the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 904 (1994), the Committee intended to carry out any action based directly on that resolution especially in so far as the establishment of an international presence in the occupied territories was concerned. It would be useful, for instance, to at least include among the main priorities of the programme of work in support of the peace process, implementation of that resolution which should be integrated into the peace process.

22. Mr. TURAY (Sierra Leone) expressed confidence in the Chairman and the Bureau and appreciation to the secretariat of the Committee for keeping delegations well informed and thanked the Permanent Observer for Palestine for having kept the Committee posted on developments in the occupied territories. He endorsed the proposed programme of work.

23. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) noting that it was crucial that Security Council resolution 904 (1994) should be implemented and that the protection of Palestinians should be guaranteed, expressed the hope that the

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

programme of work, which had been established before the adoption of that resolution, would be updated in the light of the Security Council's directives.

24. The CHAIRMAN assured those delegations that might be concerned about the security of Palestinians that immediately after the Hebron massacre he had taken it upon himself to refer the matter to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Although the outcome of those efforts - resolution 904 - might not fully satisfy all delegations it did, at least, provide for the protection of the Palestinians. The Committee therefore took implementation of the resolution very seriously - indeed, that was one of its main tasks, and the Bureau would certainly see to it. Of course, the programme of work could be amended at any moment to include effective protection of the Palestinians.

25. The programme of work was adopted.

OTHER MATTERS

26. Mr. TLILI (Department of Public Information) announced the publication, by the Department of Public Information of a 147-page book entitled Jerusalem, Visions of Reconciliation (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.3), which would shortly be available in Arabic and French. It was based on the discussions of a seminar for journalists organized in 1993 at Athens to which Palestinian, Israeli, Russian and American policy-makers and analysts had been invited. It provided a wide range of views on the question of the status of Jerusalem.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.